Veterans Administration

The Veterans Headstone and Marker Program

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Department of Memorial Affairs

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HEADSTONE AND MARKER BENEFITS AVAILABLE

The Veterans Administration (VA) will furnish, upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a Government headstone or marker to mark the grave of an eligible veteran buried in a national, military post or base cemetery, state veterans', or private cemetery.

Headstones and markers are also provided for the eligible dependents of veterans who are buried in national, military post or base cemeteries, or state veterans' cemeteries. Headstones and markers are not provided for dependents buried in private or local cemeteries.

Memorial headstones or markers are provided for eligible veterans whose remains are not available for burial.

In all cases, the grave of a veteran must be unmarked in order for a monument to be furnished at Government expense.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

- Veterans of wartime and peacetime service who were discharged from active military service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Persons whose deaths occurred under honorable conditions while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Veterans' dependents who are buried in national, military post or base cemeteries and in state veterans' cemeteries.

TYPES OF MONUMENTS AVAILABLE

Upright headstone of lightly veined American white marble. This headstone measures 42" high, 13" wide and 4" thick; weight is approximately 230 pounds.

Flat stone marker of lightly veined American white marble or light gray granite. These markers are 24" long, 12" wide and 4" thick; weight is approximately 130 pounds.

Flat bronze marker. These are 24" long, 12" wide and approximately ¾" thick; weight is approximately 18 pounds.

Niche marker. This type marker is provided for cremated remains interred in columbaria. It is provided in bronze, 8 1/2'' wide, 5 1/2'' high and 15/32'' thick.

Special upright stones. Specially designed upright marble headstones are furnished for the graves of Civil and Spanish-American War Veterans.

Congressional Medal of Honor. Monuments for deceased Congressional Medal of Honor recipients are inscribed with an enlarged replica of the medal.

INSCRIPTIONS

Mandatory items on the headstone or marker for a veteran are:

Name of Decedent

Branch of Service

Year of Birth - Year of Death

''In Memory of'' (Used only on Memorial Headstones and Markers)

Optional items inscribed at Government expense may include:

Religious Emblem

Grade, Rate or Rank

War Service

Month and Day for Dates of Birth and Death

Titles acquired in civilian life, such as Doctor or Reverend, or any other additions to the name, are not authorized at Government expense. Nicknames are not authorized except in those cases where the decedent was long known by a diminutive of a given name, for example, JOE instead of JOSEPH, FRANK instead of FRANCIS.

ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTIONS AT PRIVATE EXPENSE

It is the policy of the VA to permit the inscription of appropriate additional items at private expense, subject to space limitations and approval by the Department of Memorial Affairs.

When a Government headstone or marker is requested for the private or local cemetery grave of a deceased widowed veteran, the spouse's inscription may also be entered on the monument. The spouse's inscription, however, is an additional expense item requested and paid for by the applicant.

An applicant may request reserved inscription space on a veteran's monument when its placement is in a private or local cemetery. This space is to be used later to inscribe the spouse's commemorative data, but such an inscription would be at private expense.

Requests for additional inscription items, or reserved space, are made in the remarks section of VA Form 40-1330, or on an attached and signed separate sheet of paper.

HOW APPLICATION IS MADE

When burial takes place at a national cemetery, military post or base cemetery, or state veterans' cemetery, the Cemetery Director will initiate all necessary action for ordering an appropriate headstone or marker.

When burial takes place in a private or local cemetery, an Application for Headstone or Marker must be submitted on VA Form 40-1330. The applicant is normally a next of kin. To assist in processing, a copy of any official document attesting to service in the Armed Forces should be submitted along with the application form. Reserve Duty service only does not qualify a decedent for a monument. Original documents should not be sent because return cannot be guaranteed. Application forms may be obtained from any VA office.

SHIPMENT AND SETTING OF HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

Shipment of the headstone or marker to the consignee named on the application form is paid by the Government. The headstone or marker is shipped usually within 60-90 days from receipt of the application.

Setting the headstone or marker in a national, military post or base, or veterans' cemetery is the responsibility of the person in charge of the cemetery. There is no cost to the next of kin.

Arrangements for setting the headstone or marker in a PRIVATE OR LOCAL CEMETERY is the responsibility

REPLACEMENT OF GOVERNMENT HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

Previously furnished Government headstones or markers may be replaced at Government expense when deteriorated, illegible, cracked, broken, stolen, vandalized, the type of monument is different from that specified by the applicant, the inscription is different from that requested, or material or workmanship is not in accordance with specifications.

Any errors resulting from applicant entries on the application form cannot be remedied by replacement at Government expense. Replacement costs in these instances are paid by the applicant. Government monuments damaged by private or local cemetery personnel can be replaced only at private expense.

MONETARY ALLOWANCE IN LIEU OF A GOVERNMENT HEADSTONE OR MARKER

The VA is authorized to pay an amount not to exceed the average actual cost of a Government headstone or marker toward the private purchase of a commercially-sold monument. In order to qualify for the reimbursement, the veteran must have been buried on or after October 18, 1978. The claim must also be filed within two years from the date of purchase of the headstone or marker or the additional engraving on an existing private monument.

Application cannot be made for both the monetary allowance and the Government headstone or marker.

In order to apply for the monetary allowance, VA Form 21-8834, Application for Reimbursement of Headstone or Marker Expense, should be submitted to the applicant's nearest VA Regional Office. This form is available at any VA Regional Office.

THIS PAMPHLET IS INTENDED TO COVER ONLY IN BROAD TERMS THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HEADSTONE AND MARKER PROGRAM. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS CONTAINED ON THE INSTRUCTION SHEET WHICH ACCOMPANIES THE APPLICATION, VA FORM 40-1330. ANY VA REGIONAL OFFICE WILL BE PLEASED TO PROVIDE YOU WITH INFORMATION AND THE NECESSARY FORMS NEEDED TO APPLY FOR A GOVERNMENT HEADSTONE OR MARKER, OR AN APPLICATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF HEADSTONE OR MARKER EXPENSES.

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of the applicant. All related placement costs are paid by the applicant.

Further information may be obtained by writing the Chief Memorial Affairs Director (42), Veterans Administration, 810 Vermont Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420.

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